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Final Project Final Rationale

Client and Requirements:

Our client is **TEDxCornellUniversity.** They are a student organization on campus that aims to gather a community of people to spark deep discussion and connection through TEDTalks presentations, videos, and live speakers. The club was established at Cornell in 2011 and currently consists of a core group of eight students who organize the talks in places around campus such as the Memorial Room in Willard Straight Hall and the auditorium in Barnes Hall. The client currently only has a **Facebook page** and photos and videos from past events are scattered across the web. Please see the **appendix** for screenshots of the current Facebook page.

Their **desired audience for the site** is composed of members from the Ithaca community and Tompkins community, and the Cornell community both on campus and off, including **Cornell staff, faculty, alumni, and students** interested in actually going to a TEDTalk on campus or the ideas behind the talks.

The **general goal for the site** is to be an informational resource for people interested in learning more about what TEDxCornellUniversity is and the events they organize through an easy, efficient, accessible, and user friendly design. **As a growing organization, generating interest and involvement among the Cornell community would be greatly beneficial for the future of the organization**. To encourage involvement, the site was envisioned to have a way to express interest in becoming involved with the organization, contact the organizers or any speakers anyone is interested in after watching/attending the talks, and provide suggestions about speakers or topics and feedback on past presentations. Most importantly, drawing on the media that TEDTalks are most famous for, the site would also be an **archive** where visitors to the site will be able to look at **past photos and videos** from past events to get an idea about what TEDxCornellUniversity is and what TEDTalks in general are about.

The client wanted to see the following included in the site:
- Home page
    - Welcome message
    - Mission statement/theme: "Ideas Worth Spreading"
    - A way to join the club/learn more about the club
    - Sidebar with upcoming events
- About Us page with short bios and photos of the eboard
- Upcoming events page with Tedx events in the Cornell/Ithaca community
- Past events page with information about the speakers and the talk
- Form: application to join the club, suggestions for speakers
- Photo/video gallery with embedded videos that can be found from Tedx's Youtube Channel and the speakers' websites
- A color scheme of black, red, and white similar to the main TED site
- Inclusion of TEDxCornellUniversity logo
- A design theme and font choice similar to the main TED website

The client wanted the site to be **comprehensive**, but still easy to navigate and not overwhelming. Most of the content would be **visually oriented**, with brief information about the club as well as the speakers.

The interactive elements they wanted on the site include the following:
- Application to join the club
- Suggested topics or speakers and an application to speak at an event
- Feedback on events

However, compared to the TED website which showcases the videos more, **we attempted to showcase all the aspects of TEDxCornellUniversity** so that members of the desired audience can get a better sense of what the organization is about as a whole. This may be because the goal of the TED website is to provide a space for a large number of people to view the inspiring talks but our goal is to persuade people in our audience to get involved by giving them all the information they need

in one place.

The final version of our site currently consists of **one main page.** The main page consists of a home section, an about section, an events section, a photos section, a videos sections, a join us section, and a contact us section. **We decided to go with a one-page design that captures the clean design of the original TED website and takes into account the simplicity our client wanted but also remains visually appealing and easy to use.** We originally had different pages for both photos and videos, and thus navigating to these sections was inconsistent with the scrolling effect; because of this, we have moved everything to one page. Having one main page and the TED scrolling effect with a fixed navigation bar made it better to use as noted during user testing and also evokes a cleaner and less clumsy design.

Personas:

To obtain the data to create our personas for our client's target audience, **we spoke with an Ithaca High School student as well as a Cornell Student.** The Ithaca High School student was someone Christine met last semester, and we communicated with her through Facebook. We spoke with the Cornell student in person. We changed their names to protect their identity.

Our first persona that represents our client's desired audience is Melanie Bernal, an Ithaca High School student who has never heard of a TEDtalk. She's currently 16 years old, and is involved in Model UN, varsity track and field, varsity volleyball, varsity soccer, National Honor Society, mock trial, and debate team. She uses a Macbook Pro, and although she does not use her social media accounts very often, she does have access to reliable Internet and wifi at home and at school. She's also interested in applying to Cornell University.

This site caters to the interests and needs of Melanie Bernal because she is currently a prospective student who is interested in looking at the different organizations of Cornell, and is interested in the mission of the club. Her academic and extracurricular interests are also relevant to TEDtalks, since she's involved in clubs such as Model UN and debate. For the website, we stressed the mission statement and the purpose of TEDx to attract an audience that has never heard of what TEDx is about, and focused on providing spotlight speakers as well as quotes of speakers to spark interest. We also attempted to include a wide variety of talks that could appeal to a younger generation. Since she is not as tech-savvy, we provided straightforward forms for her to provide feedback, submissions, as well as email as the primary form of receiving updates and communication. In addition, we sought to make the site as clutter-free as possible so as to make her experience with the site straightforward and pleasing to use.

Our second persona is Joseph Strahovski, who is a 22 year old Cornell student from Ohio. He is studying Biology in the College of Arts and Sciences, and is involved in volleyball, research, and Global Medical Brigades. Joseph has heard about TED talks, watches their videos online, and often attends talks that he's interested in. He is also super tech savvy, uses Windows 8, as well as many social media websites including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Foursquare, etc. Because he lives on the Cornell campus, he has reliable access to Cornell's wifi network and wired access via the desktop computers in the computer labs scattered across campus.

Similar to Melanie, Joseph's interest in visiting this website is to learn more about the organization on campus, as well as about the speakers that are visiting to talk. He previously used TEDxCornellUniversity's Facebook page to receive updates but expressed interest in actually seeing a website for the student organization. For Joseph, who has heard of and is heavily involved and interested in TED talks, this website's mission is to highlight the profiles and videos of the past speakers, upcoming speakers, and present ways for him to get involved in TEDxCornellUniversity. Because of this, we dedicated a large part of the website to the upcoming and past events, media including photos and videos, and ways to get involved by either suggesting prospective speakers or joining the club.
In our user testing, we sought users who resembled these personas and who matched our target audience, so that their feedback could help us improve the site and cater the site towards our desired audience's specific needs.

Information Architecture/Navigation:

The content of the TEDxCornellUniversity site is divided into these seven categories listed below. **Using an open card sorting method and the five hat racks**, we categorized the content we wanted to include in our site and came up with the following categories. We put the photos and videos near each other based on proximity because they are related to each other.

We put the forms to speak and feedback under "Contact" because they are similar in context, but there is not enough content to separate into different sections on the website.

- **Home Page:** This section of our one-page layout uses a visually appealing design to highlight the main points of the organization, especially what the organization is about and does to instantly attract people to come to the mission and events of TEDxCornellUniversity. **Visitors similar to our personas described above will be able to get a quick overview of what this student organization does without having to navigate to other pages.**
    - **Spotlight:** Slideshow featured on homepage with images and a blurb about upcoming speakers, what TEDx is, what TEDxCornellUniversity is, and past events. Each image will link to their respective pages.
    - **Navigation Bar:** Basic navigation bar featuring these tabs: About, Events, Photos, Videos, Join Us, and Contact.
    - **Additional Content:** Placed around the spotlight and featuring the following content
        - **News**: a short blurb about what the organization is up to recently
        - **Poll**: What topic would you like to see at a TEDtalk at Cornell?
        - **Popular TED Quote Generator:** Displays a different quote from all TEDtalks that changes every time the page is refreshed
    - **Footer:** Social media links, including a display of how many of a user's friends have like the TEDxCornell page which will hopefully encourage them to join if they see they have many friends who have liked the page; **this will take advantage of our persona's use of social media which is typical of a younger audience.**
- **About:** This section displays information to learn about TED and TEDx in general and TEDxCornellUniversity. We display this section using the **Continuum aspect of the Five Hat Racks** because the information displayed becomes more specific as we go more in depth from the overall TED organization to independently organized TEDx events all over the world to a Cornell-specific TED-related organization. Visitors similar to the personas described above will be able to see a more detailed history and background of the larger organization as well as the Cornell-specific organization to give more context behind the TEDx events. **Persona 1 will be able to clearly see what TEDx is and what TEDxCornellUniversity is and how the two relate together. Persona 2 will be able to clearly see how TEDxCornellUniversity operates with respect to the overall TEDx organization.** All the information on this page has been put together since it all pertains to learning about what TEDx is.
    - **About TED:** Information about TED in general
    - **About TEDx:** Information about TEDx including mission statement and slogan, link to the main TEDx page
    - **About TEDxCornellUniversity:** Information about Cornell's chapter of TEDx including mission statement, purpose, etc.
    - Small blurb with social media links which appears according to responsive design
- **Events:** This section displays detailed information about upcoming and past events, **so visitors similar to the personas described above can quickly see what events will be happening soon and find out more details for the upcoming event.** Past events are displayed to give the visitors a more concrete idea of what they can expect TEDx events to be like. The events are arranged according to the **Chronological aspect of the Five Hat Racks** and have been placed together on one page so that a clear schedule of events, both past and future, can be seen.
    - **Upcoming Events:** list of upcoming speakers and details of the talk including location, time, subject and link to the speakers' own website if there is one, link to Facebook events. Information about the next upcoming event remains scarce as the organization does not want details released to the public yet.
    - **Past Events:** location and speakers of past events
- **Photos:** This section contains an exhibition of photos to give visitors to the site a more detailed view of past TEDx events. **Visitors will be able to get a better sense of what TEDx events are like if they have never been to one, like in the case of our first persona. By displaying media from past events, people like persona 2 will get an idea of what TEDx events Cornell specifically has hosted in the past and would help them better decide if they would want to join.** Photos from past events and captions on photo as hovered, and the original source of the code is from the Gamma Gallery. However, we've modified it such that it fits with our layout, as well as changes for the

responsive versions.

- **Videos:** Like the photos section, this section contains videos of past speakers to **give our personas a feel of what TEDxCornellUniversity events are like.** In this section, we used a form of Highslide Javascript so that the videos appear on the same page when the video thumbnail is clicked. We also worked to make sure that it would change with our responsive design.
- **Join Us:** This section displays the form to get involved with the club as well as eboard profiles. **For both of our personas, this section will serve as a good way for them to find out how they can be involved with the organization, especially since both are seeking to become more involved with the Cornell campus either now or in the future.**
    - **Join the Club:** form for those interested in joining the club to help plan, carry out, or participate in future events
    - **Eboard Members:** Images and captions of members of TEDxCornellUniversity. One member's picture is still missing and the client has been having trouble getting it.
- **Contact:** This section is a way to get more information about the organization in general and communicate thoughts, opinions, questions, and concerns with the organization's eboard. We have a form for apply to speak or to nominate potential speakers, and a form to provide feedback. **Someone like Persona 1 would have a medium to ask questions and find out more directly from the members of the organization. Someone like Persona 2 who has been to other TEDx events can offer his own opinions about how TEDxCornellUniversity can improve their events or express his thoughts in general**.
    - **Feedback:** Form to offer feedback, opinions, and thoughts about past events
    - **Prospective Speakers/Nominate speakers:** form for those interested in speaking at Cornell as part of a TEDtalk/form for people to nominate potential speakers

Navigation:

WOW!

We have chosen a one-page design layout for this site, so the overall navigation of our site consists of navigating around the different sections displayed on the overall main page. The first section users see when they navigate to our site is a page with the TEDxCornell University header, a slideshow spotlighting the organization, a poll, a popular quote from other TEDTalks, and a small blurb about the upcoming speaker conference. **A fixed navigation bar displays the following links: Home, About, Events, Photos, Videos, Join Us, and Contact.** When a user clicks on any of the links above, they will be directed to that section in the one-page layout through the **smooth scrolling.** On some screen sizes, the about section will also display social media links and links to the main TEDx page in a small gray box. In the video gallery, videos are from Youtube that appear on the screen when the video thumbnail is clicked. At the bottom of the contact section, social media links can be accessed.

We chose not to have subsections underneath larger sections because we thought it would be clearer to display everything on our navigation bar. In addition, our smooth scrolling effect and **hover effect on the navigation ba**r operated more smoothly when our media section was split into a photo and video section. Many users had also commented that videos are the most important part of TEDTalks so by giving it its own spot on the navigation bar, videos can be highlighted in a better way.

When a user submits a form, they are directed to a submit page that does contain a link for them to return to the main one-page layout. We did not prefer for the forms to be submitted in this way and instead wanted the confirmation to appear on the same page, but we realized that we needed to use languages beyond the scope of this class. Please see the **appendix** for a site map that illustrates our updated navigation after we moved our media (photo and videos) to our home page.

Interactive Elements:

We have included a variety of different forms that use PHP for visitors of the site to use depending on their needs and goals when they use our site. These include a form for **prospective speakers** or to nominate a speaker, a form to **join the organization**, and a form to **submit any feedback**, questions, concerns, suggestions, etc. to TEDx Cornell University. There is also a way to **sign up by email to receive more updates** from the organization on the front page. **The information**

collected through form submissions are stored in a database file that we borrowed from Project 3 so that our client can access and view the responses of people from their desired audience. Users are also redirected to another site, where they can then click on a button to return to the Home page. **We also included a poll** where users can choose what topic they would like to see in upcoming talks; we placed the poll on the front page as one user mentioned that as a good location, so that visitors to the site can easily see the poll. In addition, every time the page is refreshed, our **quote generator** consisting of quotes gathered from popular TEDTalks will display a different quote; this way, visitors similar to our personas in the desired audience will be able to get a glimpse of the insight behind TEDTalks if they do not know what the talks are like or if they would like to hear a new talk they haven't heard before. All PHP elements listed above were created from scratch by us with the exception of the poll where we also incorporated Ajax to aid in the display of the poll results.

On the front page, we use a **slideshow** to draw visitors to different aspects of the organization as well as to create an aesthetically pleasing visual. Our **photo and video galleries** draw from Gamma Gallery and Highslide, which uses Javascript. We are using these features to display both galleries in a more visually appealing way. We also have included a **scrolling effect** when links on the navigation bar to different sections are clicked and an **interesting hover effect on the navigation bar** that follows one's cursor to give the site a more lively and animated feel in general. We want the site to capture the inspired feeling that TEDTalks themselves give listeners.

We've also implemented **accordions** through jQuery into our website, specifically in the events section and in the contact section. We've done this to hide unnecessary information so that it doesn't overwhelm the user, as some users reported this feeling in our user tests. It also goes along with our scrolling effect that many users liked and emphasizes a sleek design. Headers that allow us to expand and collapse content through tabs also help create logical sections.

For **Persona 1** who may be interested in joining the organization in the future or contacting a member to learn more about what TEDxCornellUniversity is like can either **fill out the form for prospective members or the form to submit questions to the organization members**. **Persona 2** can also do the same to **learn more about the organization and actually join**. In addition, if he would like to n**ominate speakers** or then he can fill out our nomination speaker form. The different forms available for these different types of involvement that people could be interested in are only displayed one at a time through these accordions so that our **Persona 1** who is not as tech-savvy will not be overwhelmed by the fields of the form. For a person like **Persona 2**, the accordion display of forms will make the form more straightforward and easy to use, hiding unnecessary things and displaying only what is relevant to the user's goal.

For both personas, the design of the photo and video gallery will be visually appealing and more pleasing to use when they browse our videos and photos. The animation we added to the site makes the site more fun to use and not as boring. The **scrolling effect** we implemented reinforces the high-level design and makes it stand out and look innovative to our two personas who are both relatively young and **more attracted to designs that do not feel old-fashioned and boring.**

Outside Code:
- Photo Gallery: Gamma Gallery
  http://tympanus.net/codrops/2012/11/06/gamma-gallery-a-responsive-image-gallery-experiment/
- Video Gallery: Highslide JS http://highslide.com/
- Events Accordion: http://tympanus.net/codrops/2012/04/12/animated-content-tabs-with-css3/
- Forms Accordion: John Snyder, Master Accordion
- Poll: http://www.w3schools.com/php/php_ajax_poll.asp
- Navigation Bar Hover Effect: http://css-tricks.com/jquery-magicline-navigation/

Design Process:

The design and theme of our website draws mostly from the original TED website. As most TEDx entities base their websites off the original website, we will be following the **TEDx branding guidelines** carefully, specifically Section 13 which specifies web guidelines. The web templates were used to follow the guidelines for the proper use, sizing, and ratio of the TEDx logo; specifically, we drew inspiration from the TEDx web template with the white background. The **color scheme** includes the main colors of TEDx: **TED Red (#ff2b06) and TED Black (#000000)** in addition to our own addition of a dark gray (#bcbcbc). The **font scheme** consists of **Helvetica**, which is the font of the TED logo, Century Gothic, Impact, and Georgia. The placement of the font and the implementation of the color scheme on a white background draws from the **Contrast**

principle in the CRAP principles to improve readability of the content. We followed the **F-layout** in a sense to provide easy readability by including large section headers that break up potentially overwhelming blocks of text. In addition, by dividing the main content into different easy-to-read columns with and without the accordions and following a **parallel layout**, we allow users to quickly scan the top of the page where all of the section headers are displayed to efficiently find the content they are looking for without having to scroll down the page. In following the **principle of Alignment from the CRAP principles**, we make it clear that the placement of our content was intentional as everything is vertically aligned and horizontally aligned. **For our personas, a cleaner design that borrows from the original TED theme provides continuity between the organization and Cornell's chapter and make the website appealing to use for those of or around the college age.** The **easy readability** also allows the personas to save time when they just quickly want to look something up. Our intuitive design also makes it easy to use for those of all technology backgrounds and avoids feeling old-fashioned.

Here is the link to the **TEDx branding guidelines**: http://tinyurl.com/ya4nbkb

After conducting user tests, users generally liked the theme of the site and those who were familiar with the TEDTalks site noted the similarities between the two. Drawing from the **Repetition aspect of the CRAP principles**, we made sure to draw similarities between the TED site and our site to parallel the relationship between TED and TEDxCornell and implemented a **consistent, vertically-oriented design** for every section of our site that drew from TED's well-known color scheme.

Throughout the course of our user-testing and after receiving feedback from our in-class presentation and demos, we came up with the following problems that have now been addressed:

- **The placement of social media icons was not as intuitive as we thought it was**. Because of such feedback, we moved the social media icons from the top of the homepage in the right hand corner down to the footer where such contact and reference information is usually found. In addition, **our personas can now see if their friends have liked the page on Facebook** and which may make them more inclined to do so themselves.
- **The separate pages for the photo and video section were slightly unexpected in the navigation.** We thus incorporated the galleries into the main site so the transitions to the galleries would be smoother and the scrolling effect takes place. At first, we didn't want to incorporate the galleries into the main site because we believed that the media would slow down the loading of our site, but we did a test run in which we incorporated the media into the main page and the loading of the site was actually not impeded in any significant way. **Members of our target audience similar to our personas will also most likely have reliable Internet access so the loading of the one-page layout should not be overwhelming.**
- **There were no captions for the photos in the photo gallery upon first glance, and the poor quality of gallery images diminished the polished feel of the site.** We had originally used the Highslide gallery, so to solve this issue, we implemented the **Gamma photo gallery** that **displays captions on the thumbnails of the photos when the cursor hovers over it**. This way users will be able to quickly move their cursor over each photo to determine which picture is which. In addition this new gallery **contains larger thumbnails** of each picture so users can see more details of the picture without actually clicking on the picture. Because we had a lot of white space in the photo gallery section, enlarging the thumbnails of the photos was also a better use of the space. In using higher-quality images, the trade off was that some aspects of their past events could not be included as the only photos from those sites our client could find were not of high enough quality.
- **The number of forms that we implemented onto the site and the side by side placement of the forms appeared overwhelming and confusing.** Many users were confused as to which form they could use to submit feedback because all the forms looked so similar to each other and were placed one after another. In addition, the differentiation in the purposes of the forms were not clear and users were not sure which one was the right form to use. **We implemented an accordion to organize the forms**. Each header of the accordion provides a concise and clear label as to the purpose of each form and when users click on one section of the accordion, the others close. **Based on the principle of proximity from CRAP,** users can easily navigate to the form that fits their needs when the forms are closed. They can view one form at a time and not be overwhelmed by the others.
  Following up with feedback from user testing, we also organized the **event section into vertical accordions** divided by the different years that the events took place. By placing the event details into these accordions, we made it so that each event could be highlighted on its own as the other accordion sections close when the user is on the current

section.
With both accordions, we could not figure out how to make it appear clickable when the cursor hovered over it, but we believe that users will figure out that they can be clicked in the end without much difficulty.

- **The mobile version of our site contained content that was not readable in some sections and not touch-friendly in terms of navigation. In addition, the site displayed differently on smaller laptops and tablets, larger laptops, and desktops.**
  Our **responsive design** now takes into account **four different screen sizes**. However, when tested on the iPhone 4s and iPad 3, the navigation bar requires that the user double-tap on the link and when tested on an HTC Android phone, the smooth-scrolling effect does not happen. We believe that this may be caused by slight differences in the rendering of our code on the devices. Also, when the screen size becomes small enough, the navigation bar becomes multiple lines which we chose to keep on purpose because we believe usability increases and the bar is more touch-friendly.

Overall, we believe we were able to maintain the polished feel of the site that many users commended us on. We made content more organized and less overwhelming so that users would not be turned off by the content. We sought to make things clear and using our site more efficient and intuitive to save our users valuable time and effort. Please see the **appendix** for detailed screenshots and **here** for more details about our user testing.

Deployment Plan: As a new student organization, our client did not know where to host the site after it was complete. She asked for suggestions and we found some resources to help TEDxCornell host their website through **OrgSync**, which can be found here: https://help.orgsync.com/forums/22108276-The-Website-Builder. OrgSync is a new platform with many different kinds of resources for Cornell's student organizations, including **free web hosting**. The domain name will be assigned through OrgSync and correspond to the domain names for other student organizations on campus.

Notes to Graders:
- We understand that our rationale has exceeded the suggested guideline of 6 to 8 pages, but we have **bolded all the important things graders should note in our rationale to aid in greater readability**. In addition, we have included many images in our rationale that take up greater space than text, but we believe that including visuals will help the grader quickly understand what we did.
- The third-party code for the accordion we used for past events and other interactivity is not validating. We chose not to change the code to make it validate because the functionality of the accordion/tabs would be lost. After looking at other Internet resources, we believe that it may be an IE-related error.
- The **Wow Factor elements** of the site are listed below:
  - impressive responsive design (accommodates users on mobile devices, small laptops and tablets, larger laptops, and desktops)
  - large amount of PHP incorporated in different ways (feedback/contact forms, poll, quote generator)
  - unique one-page layout

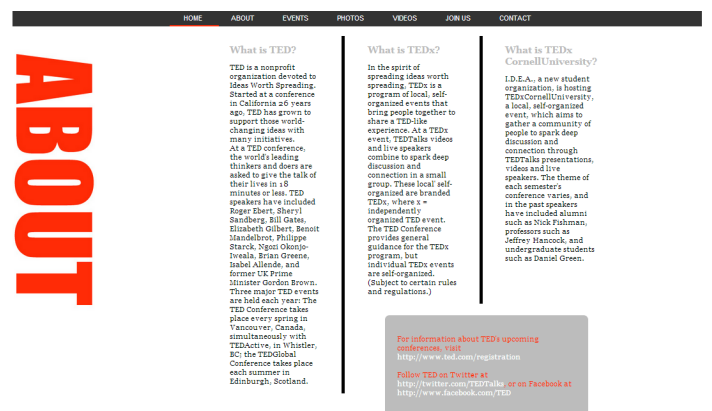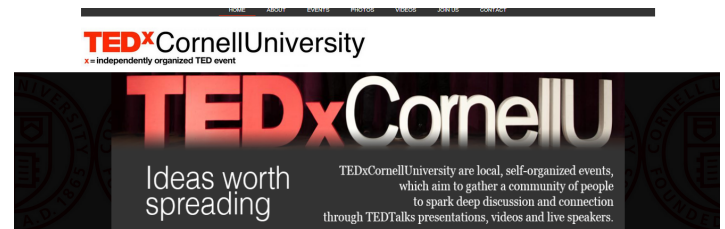**Site Map:**
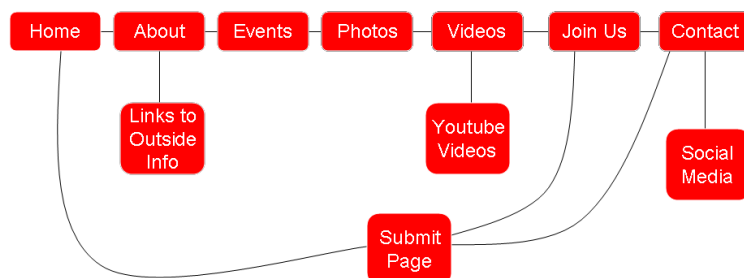
Current Facebook Page:
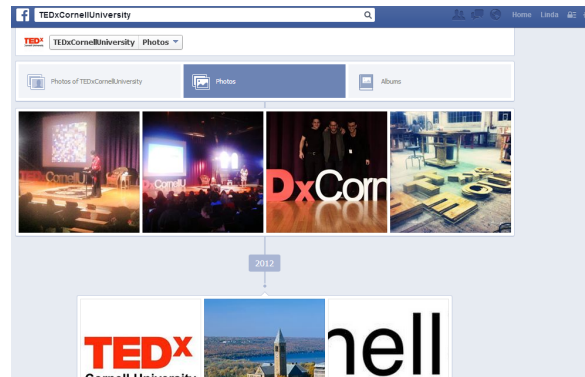
The Evolution of Our Site:

Before (original design mockups):

After (Final Product):

User Testing Protocol:
Below is the general user testing protocol we used to conduct our user testing for both rounds.

Introduction:
Hello, my name is *insert group member's name*, and I'm going to be walking you through this session of user testing. We've asked you to come today because we are creating a website for a class and we would like to see what it's like for people to actually use it.
Just so you know, we are testing the site, not you. If anything doesn't go well, it is on us and not you as the user. We are about to show you a working draft of the site and any feedback that you can give us will be greatly appreciated. We want to hear exactly what you think, so please be honest. We want to improve the site to best serve the needs of users like you.
As we proceed through this user testing session, I encourage you to think out loud and let us know what is going on in your mind. That way we can improve the site in future versions to better address the needs of users like you.
If you have any questions, feel free to ask. I will also be taking notes on my computer about what occurs during this user testing session.
Do you have any questions before we begin?

Background Questions:
Before we begin looking at the site, we would like to ask you a few questions.
- Can you give us your year, your major, and your school?
- Would you consider yourself technologically savvy? Do you often use the Internet?
- Do you have any skills in web design?
- Have you heard of TEDTalks? If so, have you heard of TEDxCornellUniversity?
- What do you like about TEDTalks and what makes you want to listen to them?

To give you a little background about the purpose of this site, this site will be used by TEDxCornellUniversity as their official website when it is completed. TEDxCornellUniversity is a local, self-organized event hosted by students at Cornell University which aims to gather a group of people to spark deep discussion and form new connections.

User Tasks:
Now you may open up the site. I will ask you to complete a series of tasks. Please think out loud so that we can understand how the site can better serve your needs. If any thoughts come to mind regarding the site, please let us

know.

> Task 1: Find the link to follow TEDxCornellUniversity on Twitter.
> Task 2: Find the location of the event that happened on October 3rd, 2011.
> Task 3: Find the picture of the speaker Graeme Bailey and a video of his talk.
> Task 4: Find the place to submit some feedback about ways to improve the club
>
> .

Other Suggestions:

Can you please provide us with some feedback regarding:

- the general theme of the site?
- the readability of the content of the site?
- the navigation of the site?
- the mobile version of the site?

Lastly, do you have any other suggestions for ways to improve the site?

Conclusion:

Thank you for participating in this user testing session. Your participation has been incredibly valuable to us, and we look forward to using the insight gathered from today's testing session to improve future versions of the site.

User Testing Report:

User Backgrounds:

Target Audience: Cornell University students interested in any of the topics that a TEDxCornellUniversity talk may cover, may or may not have heard of TEDxCornellUniversity but should have heard of TEDTalks

First Round User Testing:

User 1: Test conducted at Uris Library at 10:00 PM on November 20th

- twenty year old female Cornell University student
- pre-med, biology major in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- has heard of TEDTalks, interested in attending one especially pertaining to science
- uses the internet everyday and is technologically savvy, has working knowledge of web design
- fits into our target audience

User 2: Test conducted in North Campus dorm at 9:00AM on November 21st

- eighteen year old female Cornell University student
- pre-med, biology major concentrating in nutrition in the College of Arts and Sciences
- has heard of TEDTalks and has already liked TEDxCornellUniversity's Facebook page, listens to TEDTalks on mobile app
- uses the Internet daily to complete schoolwork, has many social media accounts and frequently uses social media to receive news and communicate with others, has no knowledge of web design
- fits into our target audience

User 3: Test conducted at Uris Library at 8:15PM on November 21st

- eighteen year old female Cornell University student
- pre-med, Human Biology Health and Society major in College of Human Ecology
- has heard of TEDTalks but has never heard of TEDxCornellUniversity, has watched talks in class before
- uses the Internet daily to complete schoolwork, uses many different forms of technology for communication, schoolwork, etc., has no knowledge of web design

- fits into our target audience

Results from First Round of User Testing:
The following is a consolidated report of our observations and findings from each user test from the first round regarding the following tasks.

Task 1: Find the link to follow TEDxCornellUniversity on Twitter.
- some easily found link but others missed the social media logos on top right corner of website
  - some said it was a strategic move to place at the top of the homepage: stood out because it was at the top of the TED logo, common location for social media to be displayed on websites
  - looked at navigation bar first to find a section for it and just happened to glance over and see that it was on the top right
  - others said that they would have liked for it to be at the bottom as part of the footer since that's usually where it is placed
  - should also add the link to the contact page
- use of familiar Twitter logo made link easy to spot
- also nice that the link was included in multiple sections of the site like the about section

Task 2: Find the location of the event that happened on October 3rd, 2011
- all users tested managed to complete the task easily - navigation bar label was clear, intuitive, and not ambiguous
- liked the scrolling effect when "Events" was clicked on and thought one page layout was unique, different, and innovative
- liked more vertical layout of event text and pictures
- font sizes do not reflect clear terms of hierarchy of information, the date could be larger, and more font colors could be used to create variety

Task 3: Find the picture of the speaker Graeme Bailey and a video of his talk.
- easily able to navigate to media section and then respective photo and videos section
- liked how larger pictures could be seen after clicking thumbnail
- all users had trouble finding which picture was Graeme Bailey's without going through every single one, said that captions on photos would be very helpful
- photo gallery could be more uniform in display of thumbnail sizes, thumbnails could also be bigger
- higher quality pictures would make site look more professional
- videos section should be displayed much more professionally, bulleted list layout was weird

Task 4: Find the place to submit some feedback about ways to improve the club.
- most said it was easy to navigate to this section of the site by clicking contact, but some said navigation bar labels were a little ambiguous
- form is easy and straightforward to respond to but number of forms all placed together is a little overwhelming, had to skim titles of each form and decide which best fit her needs
- sometimes when they couldn't find the forms they would just scroll around until they found it

Other Feedback and Suggestions:
- General Theme:
  - theme looks very nice and professional, clean, and closely resembles the overall TED site
  - colors are simple and site does not look cluttered

- Readability of Content:
    - easy to read, crisp-looking, black text on white background has lots of contrast and bright red titles make it easy to read.
    - columns of content are slightly hard to read, lots of empty room and columns of text are very thin
    - font choices reflect theme of site and TEDTalks
    - about section is very wordy, a little overwhelming
    - looks like a magazine or print publication
- Site Navigation:
    - scrolling effect is cool and interesting to use
    - easy to use navigation bar and was a unique design, used one-page layout and effects well
    - scrolling effect doesn't work when going from any page back to home
    - one-page design gives people two options to navigate the site: either by clicking on the nav bar links or just scrolling up and down directly
- Mobile Version:
    - some content is misplaced and overlapping, improved alignment of content
    - too much scrolling and website is a little long, should utilize empty space to condense length of website
    - bigger buttons and more considerations of touchscreen interfaces
- Other:
    - should make slideshow in home section bigger and make it more eye-catching
    - better spacing between contents

Problems To Fix:
- **The current placement of social media icons was not as intuitive as we thought it was**. Users stated that they would like the social media icons to be placed in the footer of the site as well since our footer had no content before and because footers often contain such content. One person missed the social media icons on the top right hand corner of the screen altogether but did click on the Contact tab on our navigation bar. They then scrolled all the way down to the bottom of the page and were surprised to see that there was nothing on our footer except for a copyright. We plan on leaving the social media icons in their current location but we also plan to add the social media logos in our footer. That way, if users accidentally miss the social media icons at the top of the site and try to look for the link in the contact section at the bottom of the site, they will also be able to find the social media links. By adding the social media icons to the bottom of the site in the way that we did, users can see if their friends have liked the page on Facebook and thus may be more inclined to do so themselves.
- **The separate pages for the photo and video section are slightly unexpected in the navigation.** The people we tested the site on actually did not comment on the separate pages for the photo and video galleries, but we believe that by incorporating the galleries into the main site, the transitions to the galleries will be smoother. At first, we didn't want to incorporate the galleries into the main site because we believed that the media would slow down the loading of our site, but we did a test run in which we incorporated the media into the main page and the loading of the site was actually not impeded in any significant way. Thus, by incorporating the galleries, when users navigate to these sections, the scrolling effect will also occur and there will be a smooth transition from one section to another.
- **When a user is in any other section besides the home section and then the user clicks to go home, the scrolling effect does not work and the user is taken abruptly to the top of the page.** Many users reported this problem and were surprised at how abrupt the transition was when going back up the site. To solve this problem, we had to revise the use of our Javascript code that we used to implement the scrolling effect. We had failed to make sure the scrolling effect would work as we scrolled back up the site. By implementing the scrolling effect both ways, the site looks more polished, more visually appealing, and is more fun to use.

- **There are no captions for the photos in the photo gallery upon first glance.** Captions only appear after the thumbnail is clicked on by the user. Many users reported this problem and believed it to be annoying to have to look at each picture to discover the picture of the speaker they wanted. In addition, one user stated that she would like the display of the thumbnails to be not only more uniform but also larger. To solve this issue, we implemented another photo gallery that displays captions on the thumbnails of the photos when the cursor hovers over it. This way users will be able to quickly move their cursor over each photo to determine which picture is which. In addition this new gallery contains larger thumbnails of each picture. This way users can see more details of the picture without actually clicking on the picture. Because we had a lot of white space in the photo gallery section, enlarging the thumbnails of the photos was also a better use of the space.
- **The layout of the videos in the video gallery do not display any thumbnails of the videos and the current layout does not give any indication that the links are to videos.** Many users were taken aback by the stark layout of the video section. After being impressed with the overall look of the other sections, many users were surprised to see the plain and undecorated list of links to the Youtube videos. We implemented thumbnails for each video and when the thumbnails are clicked on, the video shows up on that very screen and the user does not get directed to the Youtube site. This way, users can quickly access all the videos and see a preview of the video without having to actually click on the link without being able to see the video.
- **The number of forms that we implemented onto the site and the side by side placement of the forms appeared overwhelming and confusing.** Many users were confused as to which form they could use to submit feedback because all the forms looked so similar to each other and were placed one after another. In addition, the differentiation in the purposes of the forms were not clear and users were not sure which one was the right form to use. We implemented an accordion to organize the forms. Each header of the accordion provides a concise and clear label as to the purpose of each form and when users click on one section of the accordion, the others close. This way users will not be confused by all the form fields and all the forms open for them to see. They can view one form at a time and not be overwhelmed by the others.

Second Round User Testing:
User 4: Test conducted in Accel Lab in Carpenter Hall at 2:35PM on November 22nd
- Twenty year old female Cornell University student
- Information Science major in College of Arts and Sciences, DA minor
- Technologically competent and frequently browses the web, has working knowledge of web design
- Has heard of TEDTalks and would definitely want to attend one at Cornell, especially Jeremy Blum
- fits into our target audience

User 5: Test conducted in Accel Lab in Carpenter Hall at 2:50PM on November 22nd
- Nineteen year old female Cornell University student, lives on West Campus
- Information Science major in College of Arts and Sciences
- Has heard of TEDTalks and TEDxIthacaCollege but not TEDxCornellUniversity, would be interested in a good speaker but not necessarily the organization itself ("some TEDTalks are good but sometimes they can be BS")
- often uses the web, technologically savvy, working knowledge of web design
- fits into our target audience

User 6: Test conducted in Accel Lab in Carpenter Hall at 3:05PM on November 22nd
- Eighteen year old male Cornell University student
- prospective Information Science major
- Has heard of TEDTalks and interested in attending an event depending on what the talk is about, did not know

about TEDxCornellUniversity
- Technologically savvy, often uses the web, working knowledge of web design
- fits into our target audience

Second Round User Testing Results:

Task 1: Find the link to follow TEDxCornellUniversity on Twitter.
- social media placed in strategic places, easy to navigate to
- use of familiar social media icons made it easier to spot

Task 2: Find the location of the event that happened on October 3rd, 2011
- location of event was easily found
- hierarchy of information not clearly expressed through fonts

Task 3: Find the picture of the speaker Graeme Bailey and a video of his talk.
- easily found pictures and videos
- pictures should be better quality
- more focus should be placed on video gallery since when most people think of TEDTalks they think of listening/watching the talk

Task 4: Find the place to submit some feedback about ways to improve the club.
- accordions were interesting to use
- forms were well-designed and red was a nice accent color

Other Feedback and Suggestions:
- General Theme:
  - site does a good job echoing TEDTalk color scheme and theme
  - looks very professional and clean
- Readability of Content:
  - contrast between black and white text is nice
  - use of red colored font in certain places adds visual appeal
  - very vertical, sometimes content in columns is hard to read
- Site Navigation:
  - fixed navigation bar is very nice and convenient
- Mobile Version:
  - alignment of content should be fixed
  - some aspects of the site should take into account touchscreen users
- Other:
  - slideshow image is foggy and could be displayed in better quality
  - resolution problems on desktop computers
  - wanted to click on slideshow pictures
  - PHP interactivity in the form of a poll to vote on future topics TEDTalks should include would be nice

Problems To Fix: The problems in this section have not been addressed in the submission for Milestone 3, but we do plan to address these issues in future drafts of the site.
- The quality of the images on the site are poor quality and diminish the polished feel of the site.
- The content of the slideshow is currently the same for every slide.
- On certain desktop computers, the resolution of some images appear fuzzy.

- The placement of text in columns in the about section can be overwhelming to read.

Some users commented on the better use of font sizes to reflect the hierarchy of information but we did not fix this problem. Instead we addressed the problem in a different way and we organized the event section into accordions divided by the different years that the events took place. By placing the event details into these accordions, we made it so that each event could be highlighted on its own as the other accordion sections close when the user is on the current section. In terms of contradictory feedback, some users liked the magazine feel of the about section but others stated that the site was very vertical and that the columns of text were overwhelming to read. We shifted the widths of the columns but did not do much else. Because it was not an overwhelming majority of users mentioning the problem, we will deal with this issue in a future milestone. We personally could see how the readability could be an issue in the about section, but we have not found a better way to display the text as of now so we will take this finding from the users who had a problem with the readability into account in the future. All the problems that the users found we acknowledged and we have addressed it or are working to address it in some way.